Washington Post
Times Herald

Senators Hear Dita Beard Deny Writing Memo

3/27/72

Attack Halts Questioning By Panel

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DENVER, March 26 — ITT lobbyist Dita D. Beard testified under oath in a hospital room here today that she never wrote a published memorandum that linked settlement of antitrust cases against the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. with the company's pledge of at least $200,000 to the Republican National Convention.

A few hours later, during a second session of questioning by a special subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Mrs. Beard collapsed with severe chest pains and her interrogation was abruptly halted by two physicians in attendance.

Ashen-faced and obv. shaken, three members of seven-man subcommitte Sens. Philip A. Hart (D-Mich. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass. and Edward J. Gurney (R-Fla.) —told newsmen they would cancel the additional two days of scheduled hospital-room hearings and return to Washington.

"I feel that basic decency would compel us to withdraw from further interrogation," Hart said.

Mrs. Beard's doctors and lawyers, however, said that if she continues to rest well tonight, they would prefer to have the subcommittee continue questioning her and "get this thing over with."

The 53-year-old lobbyist's sudden attack—described by the doctors as angina pectoris, the possible "harbinger" of an "incipient fibrilation" or acute heart attack—came at 4:03 p.m. MST, one hour into the second scheduled 90-minute interview.

Sitting up in her bed in an assembly room of the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital at the time, Mrs. Beard fell back, clutched her right hand to the left side of her chest and moaned. She became flushed and incoherent.

As the crowded room was cleared, her doctors gave her an injection of a painkilling drug and put her under heavy sedation.

The doctors said they had a warning sign on medical monitoring equipment five minutes earlier, but after conferring with her lawyers decided not to stop the questioning and never told the senators of the warning sign.

See BEARD, A18, Col. 1

95th Year · No. 113 © 1972, The Washington Post Co. MONDAY, MARCH 27, 1972

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ITT lobbyist Dita Beard, in Denver hospital bed, shakes hands with Sen. Edward Kennedy, Sen. Philip Hart is at right.

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ITT lobbyist Dita Beard awaiting Senate questioners.

ITT Aid

BEARD, From A1

Mrs. Beard collapsed just as she began answering a question by Gurney about whether she knows acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst, at whose request the special hearings concerning ITT were convened early this month.

During the first questioning session this morning, Mrs. Beard denied much of the substance of the memorandum published by columnist Jack Anderson and purported to have been written by her. But she confirmed several significant details in that memo.

With her heart monitored on an electrocardiograph, Mrs. Beard told six senators that she has been in "a horrible mess" personally and professionally ever since Anderson published his version of the memorandum.

As she testified for 2½ hours, her health seemed to hold up better than originally expected and Mrs. Beard appeared to enjoy the opportunity to tell her story.

In a 12-page statement read to the senators by her attorney, David W. Fleming of Van Nuys, Calif., Mrs. Beard said:

"I want this committee and the world to know that the Anderson memorandum is not my memorandum, that I am innocent of any wrongdoing and that I shall spend the rest of my life, for however long that might be, in an unceasing effort to find out who did this to me and why."

Under questioning, the 53-year-old lobbyist said, "I wasn't there"—in ITT's Washington office—on the date typed at the top of the Anderson memo, June 25, 1971.

She confirmed, however, that she had written another memo, probably earlier, which discussed an offer by ITT's Sheraton Hotel division to guarantee financing of the GOP National Convention this summer in San Diego.

Mrs. Beard said the memo she did write contained sev-

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le Denies Writing Memo

eral sentences that are in the version published by Anderson, including an assertion that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell knew of the convention pledge last spring.

Mitchell, who resigned as Attorney General March 1 to head President Nixon's re-election campaign, has testifled before the commlttee in Washington that to this day he is unaware of the financing arrangements for the convention.

The lobbyist verified a reference in the Anderson published memo to a "call from the White House" to William R. Merriam, head of ITT's Washington office, concerning the convention contribution.

In that phone call, Mrs. Beard testified, the White House asked whether the contribution might be as large as $600,000. Merriam then asked her, she said, whether the money would be going "to Nixon's campaign."

Although several Republican officials have said publicly that the ITT pledge was for $400,000, the corporation itself insists that it only intended to spend a maximum of $200,000.

Reading through the first paragraph of the memo as published by Anderson, Mrs. Beard stopped only when she got to the last sentence: "John Mitchell has certainly kept it (the convention contribution) on the higher level only, we should be able to do the same."

"I don't know where in the world that mother came from," she said of that sentence.

Most of the rest of the published memorandum, Mrs. Beard said, is "pure baloney."

She scoffed at references to the convention pledge in the Anderson-published version as a "noble commitment."

"This was strictly a business proposition to me," she said. "There was nothlng noble about it."

In the first of six scheduled 90-minute sessions in an assembly room of the Rocky Mountain osteopathic hospltal here, Mrs. Beard readily launched into the salty language that her friends and associates say she is known for in Washington.

During Mrs.Beard's sworn testimony, there were several conflicts wlth information that has previously been submitted to the Judiciary Committee during the past 3½ weeks.

For example, Mrs. Beard's version of her interviews with Brit Hume, an associate of Jack Anderson, was substantially different from that already testified to by Hume.

Mrs. Beard claimed that she told Hume "again and again the memo wasn't mine." But Hume, who is in Denver for the hospltal hearing, said once more that Mr.s Beard had actually confirmed repeatedly that she did write the memo.

As he read through Mrs. Beard's prepared statement, Hume told other reporters that parts of it were "preposterous" and that her account of what she told him was "a lie."

Hume and Anderson have said that they only published the memo attributed to Mrs. Beard after satisfying themselves that it was authentic.

The lobbyist insisted in her prepared statement that "I have never sought to run away, hide, escape or make myself unavailable to this committee."

She said she left Washington on March 2 "to get some rest which I desperately needed because of my heart condition and on advice of my doctor." She said she was en route to Bozeman, Mont., for a trip to West Yellowstone when she was stricken with a heart attack on the plane and forced to stop in Denver.

Robert McCall, a friend wlth whom Mrs. Beard stayed when she first arrived here, has previously told The Washington Post that she called him ln advance to say she was comlng to Denver and never mentioned golng on further. Mrs. Beard's doctor, Victor L. Liszka, of Arlington, Va., previously testified under oath that he warned her against traveling out of the Washington area.

In her testimony, Mrs. Beard told the subcommittee of a trip to the New York headquarters of ITT immediately after Anderson's release of her alleged memorandum, during which she was denied permission to talk with corporation president Harold S. Geneen.

She said that ITT officials, including Edward J. Gerrity, vice president for public relations, kept insisting "that I had written it" and demanding a detailed explanation.

"I had absolutely no one to turn to," Mrs. Beard told the senators. "I could not make them listen . . . I didn't know what to do to get somebody to help me prove this . . . It looked like someone was putting a fast period to my existence."